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A LEAF FROM THE LIFE

OF

PRESIDENT W. H. HARRISON.

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A LEAF FROM THE LIFE

OF

PRESIDENT W. H. HARRISON.

From the Watertown, N. Y., Register, July 21, 1840.

From the Troy Whig.

GEN. MILLER AND GEN. HARRISON.

Read the letter of the brave General MILLER, in this evening's Whig, in which he also bears honorable testimony to the bravery and virtues of Gen. HARRISON. And who is Gen. Miller? some Tory of the latest importation will, perhaps, inquire. He is a son of the Granite State, and as brave as her Stark, her Sullivan, or her Cilley. Without any disparagement to any other Hero of the last War, we may truly say of him as Napoleon said of Ney:—"He was the BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE." He was in active service during the whole period of the War, and when asked by Gen. Brown if he could take a British redoubt, at Bridgewater, from which a murderous fire of grape and cannon shot was poured like a hail storm upon our troops, gave that answer which has immortalized him—"I'LL TRY, SIR." And he *did* take it. Miller led the American Army in the memorable charge at Lundy's Lane—and whenever a deed of more than usual daring was to be done, or a forlorn hope to be led, Miller was the ascendant genius of the hour. For his services in the War he was appointed by Mr. Madison to the honorable post of Governor of Arkansas. Having resigned that office on account of his health, he was appointed by Monroe, Collector of the Port of Salem, Mass., an office which he yet holds, having been twice re-appointed during the late and the present administrations. Henceforth, however, he must make up his mind to be called a British Whig—a Hartford convention Federalist—and everything that is odious, by miscreants who were in their cradles when he was storming British fortresses on our Northern frontier, and rolling back by his patriotism and bravery the tide of war from our borders.

(From the Boston Atlas.)

We are permitted to make public the following interesting correspondence:

BOSTON, June 29, 1840.

My Dear General!—

I address you with the frankness which one old friend may use towards another. My object is to learn what you think of the recent attacks on the military character of Gen. HARRISON. I

believe you were in the army of the West, in the campaign of Tippecanoe; although I do not remember that you served with him after the declaration of War against England; but as a military man, forming your judgment impartially, and when the facts were recent, your opinion would be of great value. If there be any blot on his military fame, it ought to be known; if there be not, you will feel that an old soldier ought not to be so unjustly and rudely attacked.

Gen. HARRISON is before the country for the Presidency. I do not know that we shall elect him, but I can say, in your own language, my dear General, that "WE'LL TRY."

Yours, with unceasing regard,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

Gen. JAMES MILLER.

SALEM, June 30, 1840.

My Dear Sir:—

I have the honor to have received your letter of yesterday, requesting me to state what I think of the recent attacks on the military character of Gen. HARRISON.—In answer I can truly say, that I have noticed with deep regret, attacks, not only on his well earned military fame, but also upon his private and moral character. My first acquaintance with General HARRISON was in the year 1811. I was on duty in the 4th Regiment of Infantry, then commanded by Col. John P. Boyd—afterwards Gen. Boyd—under orders to proceed to Vincennes, and there report to Gov. HARRISON. We did so.

We remained at Vincennes some days, and united ourselves with the volunteers assembled there, devoting our limited time to purposes of organization and drill. We then took up our line of march for the Indian country, and proceeded by slow and cautious marches, until we had reached about seventy miles up the Wabash towards Tippecanoe, where we halted and threw up a stockaded work, which we called FORT HARRISON. Here I remained until the army returned from Tippecanoe after the Battle.

Although I was not in the battle, still I took great interest in it: had much conversation with all the officers on their return; and made every inquiry I could think of respecting their movements and encampments, the attack and defence, and the operations of the battle throughout;—and I made up my mind, unhesitatingly, that the campaign had been conducted with great bravery, skill and judgment, and that nothing was left undone, that could be done, consistently with the General's express orders from the War Department, which I saw and read. Nor have I ever known or heard of any act of his, which has, in the least degree, altered the opinion I then formed of him. I will add, that if I ever had any military skill, I am more indebted for it to Gen. HARRISON than any other man.

Soon after the Battle, I wrote a letter to Gen. Benjamin Pierce—late Governor of New Hampshire—my military father, as I call him—giving a somewhat detailed account of the campaign of Tippecanoe.—That letter was preserved by Gen. P. and might now probably be found among his papers. If it is in existence, it will show what were my opinions at that time, as would also

several letters then written by me to various friends. In those days I never heard that Gen. HARRISON was a coward or wore petticoats.

To conclude, I freely express my opinion, after following him through all his civil and military career—after living with him in his family more than six months, that General WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON is as FREE FROM STAIN OR BLEMISH as it falls to the lot of man to be.

I am, dear sir, your old friend,

JAMES MILLER.

Hon. DANIEL WEBSTER.

(*Boston Morning Post*, Aug. 1st, 1840).

Gen. Miller, who lately wrote a letter to the Hon. Mr. Webster bolstering up Gen. Harrison's military character, told a different story at Hancock, N. H., where the people gave him a public dinner, *directly after the war*. In his speech on that occasion, Gen. Miller, after complimenting most of the prominent officers of the army, said, as for Gen. Harrison, he should not speak of him, as HE DID NOT CONSIDER HIM AS POSSESSING EITHER THE COURAGE OR ABILITIES NECESSARY TO MAKE A GOOD OFFICER. This can be proved by unimpeachable evidence, if Gen. Miller or his friends deny it.

From The Bay State Democrat,
(*Boston*, Aug. 15th, 1840.)

GEN. MILLER'S OPINION OF HARRISON.

It is pretty well known to the public, that not long since, General James Miller, Collector of the port of Salem—an office-holder under the national government—came before the public in a letter to Daniel Webster, as an electioneerer against the government which employs him, and as a sort of godfather to General Harrison. This letter, with the one from Mr. Webster, in which he says, "If there be any blot on his (Harrison's) military fame, it ought to be known,"—have gone the rounds of all the federal prints in the country; and General Miller has by his certificate of military character to Harrison, placed himself in the highest notch of fame in the federal party. The great horror for government office-holders, which the federalists have so often shown, in this instance entirely disappears; and Miller stands forth as not only the *bravest* general, but the *best* office-holder ever known in the history of our country, if not in the world!

In the letter from Miller alluded to, dated Salem, June 30th, 1840, after stating that he was not present at Tippecanoe when the battle at that place was fought, he says:—

"Although I was not in the battle, still I took great interest in it; had much conversation with all the officers on their return, and made every inquiry I could think of respecting their movements and encampments, the attack and defence, and the

operations of the battle throughout ;—and I made up my mind, unhesitatingly, that the campaign had been conducted with great bravery, skill and judgment, and that nothing was left undone, that could be done consistently with the General's express orders from the War Department, which I saw and read. Nor have I ever known or heard of any act of his, which has, in the least degree, altered the opinion I then formed of him. I will add, that if I ever had any military skill, I am more indebted for it to Gen. Harrison than to any other man."

Here, then, are the opinions of Gen. Miller in 1840, in relation to the military skill of Gen. Harrison during the war. Now what were Gen. Miller's opinions of Harrison's military skill at the battle of Tippecanoe and his bravery during the war, as expressed when all the incidents connected with the campaign conducted by Harrison, were fresh upon his mind? The answer may be found in the following copies of certificates, which have been politely furnished us by a gentleman of great respectability, residing in Hillsborough, N. Hampshire, the originals of which are now in his possession :

[COPY]

To the Editor of the Bay State Democrat.

HILLSBOROUGH, N. H., August 12, 1840.

SIR—I have recently seen a letter from Gen. James Miller, touching the Military character of General Harrison, at which I was not a little surprised. He must have changed his opinion of General Harrison, since the late war, very much ; and, lest he may have forgotten what it then was, I will refer him to some facts within my recollection.

Soon after the surrender of Detroit, when Gen. Miller returned to New Hampshire, the citizens of Hancock and vicinity escorted him into town, and paid him such attentions as were due his rank. He conversed very freely on the occasion, and gave an account of the army, and of the officers. In speaking of General Harrison, he said he had but little to say, BUT THAT HE THOUGHT HE WANTED THE COURAGE OF A SOLDIER.

I have the honor to be

Your Obed't Serv't,

THOMAS BURTT.

[COPY]

ANTRIM, N. H., August 12, 1840.

While Gen. Miller was in New Hampshire, upon parole, during the late war, he attended the Review of the 26th Regiment, at Peterborough, of which I was Adjutant.

While we were in the marquee together, he conversed freely, —upon the events of the war, and the officers of the Army. He spoke particularly of General Harrison, and expressed himself in terms of disapprobation of his qualifications for the situation he then occupied. I was disappointed to find that he entertained so low an opinion of his character.

JACOB WHITTEMORE.

[COPY]

HANCOCK, N. H., August 12, 1840.

When Gen. Miller was on a tour to New Hampshire, during the late war, I was present when he stopped at the Woodbury-village, in Antrim. In conversation, relative to the conduct of the war upon the frontier, he spoke particularly of the attack made by the Indians at "Tippecanoe," and said, *that if General Harrison had had the discretion of Gen. Gaines, he probably would not have lost a dozen men.*

THOMAS McMASTER, JR.

In 1840, Miller says, in relation to the battle of Tippecanoe, that he was not in it, but felt a great "interest in it," that he made all the inquiries he "could think of" respecting the movements, encampments, attacks, &c., of the battle, and "made up his mind unhesitatingly, *that the campaign had been conducted with GREAT BRAVERY, SKILL AND JUDGMENT, and that nothing was left undone that could be done, &c.*

Now, during the war, and when on a visit to New Hampshire, soon "after the surrender of Detroit," in speaking of General Harrison he said, according to the first certificate, "*he thought he wanted THE COURAGE OF A SOLDIER.*"

Again: we have the testimony of another witness, who says that Miller, when on the same visit, spoke particularly of General Harrison, and *expressed himself in terms of DISAPPROBATION OF HIS QUALIFICATIONS for the situation he then occupied.*

Once more: we have another witness, and from the mouths of these three witness shall the truth be established. The third witness says—"In conversation (with Miller) relative to the conduct of the war upon the frontier, *he spoke particularly of the attack made by the Indians at Tippecanoe, and said that IF GEN. HARRISON HAD HAD THE DISCRETION of General Gaines, he probably WOULD NOT HAVE LOST A DOZEN MEN.*"

General Miller says in his letter: "If I ever had any military skill, I am more indebted for it to General Harrison than to any other man." Indebted to Harrison for his military skill? Can it be possible that the man whom Miller pronounced as "WANTING THE COURAGE OF A SOLDIER;" as being "UNQUALIFIED FOR THE SITUATION HE THEN OCCUPIED;" and as lacking "DISCRETION"—we say, can it be possible that General Miller is more indebted to this man for *his* "military skill," than to "any other man"?

This assertion of Miller's being indebted to Harrison, for all his "military skill," is all moonshine. Miller, if we are correctly informed, was appointed Major in the Army, 1808. In 1811, he marched under Colonel Boyd, as Lieut. Colonel of the 4th Infantry, for the North Western Frontier; and according to his own letter, was not in the action of Tippecanoe. We have not been able to learn that Gen. Miller *ever served* under General Harrison, as an *authorized military commander*. If he ever did, will he or some of his friends inform us when or where it was?

Is it not rather extraordinary that General Miller, under these circumstances, should attribute all the information he

possesses on military tactics, to General Harrison? It is no more extraordinary than hundreds of things which are constantly taking place with the federal party. They cry out against office-holders, and straightway the godlike Daniel addresses a letter to *My Dear General*, an office-holder, to get a certificate of the military and *moral* character of the federal nominee for the Presidency, in order to help his election.—In his letter, Webster says—"I do not know that we shall elect him; but I can say, in your own language, *my Dear General*, that 'we'll try.'"

Gen. Miller concludes his letter as follows, which caps the climax of absurdity and inconsistency, to say nothing about the direct falsehood which it contains.

"To conclude, I freely express my opinion, after following him through all his civil and military career, after living with him in his family more than six months, that Gen. William H. Harrison is as free from stain or blemish, as it falls to the lot of man to be."

General Harrison, "as far from stain or blemish as it falls to the lot of man to be?" In what school of morals was General Miller educated?—Among what kind of society has he associated?—Where has he been during a somewhat long life, that he has formed so low an estimate of the moral capacities "of man?" Could General Miller have followed Harrison through "all his civil and military career," without witnessing sufficient of his acts and character, to have stamped the wholesale assertion which he has made, as a lie, before it had escaped from his pen?—as a lie upon human nature? Perhaps, a former member of Congress, a neighbor of General Miller, could give him some information in relation to the *moral* character of General Harrison?

But we will not pursue the subject of the *moral* character of General Harrison, at the present time. Our object, at this time, has been to show the inconsistency, if not downright misrepresentations, of a man who has set himself up as a fair mark for comment, and who, by the falsehoods he has uttered, and the position which he holds, is a fit subject for the severest comment. If we have not now shown that Miller's certificate, in favor of Harrison, is not worth a straw—that he has on a former occasion, expressed opinions entirely the reverse, "we'll try" again. In the meantime, we advise him to attend to the duties of his office,—or at any rate, if he must enter publicly the political arena, against the Government, and the people by whom he is employed, we trust he will be careful to keep hereafter the truth on his side. For the present, we have done with him.

Bay State Democrat, Boston, Monday Evening, August 24, 1840.

TO GEN. JAMES MILLER.

As you have deemed it expedient to enter the political arena, for the purpose of aiding the federal party in their support of General Harrison, and have added your certificate of approbation to his military skill and services, we invite you to sit down with us and read the record of the doings and sayings of a public festival given by the citizens of Boston in the early part

of the year 1815, in honor of the distinguished services of the heroes of the second war.

On the eighth of March, 1815, a public dinner was given to Brig. Gen. JAMES MILLER, at Concert Hall, by the citizens of Boston. The Hon. William Eustis presided. Commodore Bainbridge, Lieut. Gov. Gray, Judge Davis, Benjamin Austin, and other distinguished republicans and friends of the war, were present. Among the toasts were the following:

"Brown, Gaines Scott, Ripley, Bainbridge, Decatur, Hull, Porter, Perry, Mc'Donough, Jones and Blakely—the brightness of their glory will light up with a never-fading lustre the page of American history."

"Gen. Jackson—The Hero of the West—whose bravery inspired the perfection of discipline, and proved that no tactics are superior to stout hands and honest hearts."

"Beauty and Booty—the golden apples in our Hesperian garden; we have a dragon there who knows how to defend them."

"Brig. Gen. Ripley—the scholar and the soldier—great in the cabinet and great in the field."

"The Hero of New Orleans—the American Ajax—may some American Homer rise up to immortalize his deeds."

The foregoing were regular toasts, prepared by the Committee of Arrangements, composed entirely of democrats and friends of the war. Now, sir, we ask you why the name of Harrison was omitted? Why was not the immortal Harrison remembered and complimented on this occasion? Why did the old war-hawks, who sat at the festive board, call up before them, in grateful remembrance, the brilliant achievements of Jackson, Brown, Gaines, Scott, Ripley, Miller, and other devoted champions of the war, and, as it would seem, studiously avoid even the slightest allusion to the glorious services of the *great* Harrison! In the Boston Patriot of March 11, 1815, is a full account of the celebration, and not one word or thought of this *great* general, whom you have recently been compelled to glorify, was uttered upon that occasion. You, yourself, gave as a toast upon that occasion the following sentiment:—

"Gratitude—the soldier's richest treasure."

Think you that had you believed then that Gen. Harrison was the great national benefactor you now seem to wish the people might believe, that you would have offered such a sentiment in the studied absence of all allusion even to *his* name? At this period the pen of history had written all his achievements; he did nothing afterward to gain glory; and here, where all his illustrious companions in arms received into their hearts "the richest of treasure—a people's gratitude," your great General—your second Washington—your greatest and best, was *most unaccountably forgotten*.

Come out, sir, like an honest man; tear yourself away from your present associates, men who were once your enemies as they are now your friends—men who mourned at your successes and rejoiced at your reverses—men who, with your new correspondent, Daniel Webster, at their head, love and glorify Harrison for what he did not do, rather than for anything he did do—and men who are now attempting to reward him for throwing up his commission, abandoning the war, and deserting his post

at the hour of his country's greatest need. We say, come out from your party subserviency, and tell the honest truth. Were not the names of Hull and Harrison omitted intentionally? did the republicans of that day think well of either of them? would you have then said of the latter what you have recently written?

But we will say nothing further at this time than to add, that your late letter in the Essex Register shows that you have less respect for yourself than we had for you. We had hoped that you might have passed to your last resting place, with all the laurels which you won fighting for the liberty and honor of your country, bright and fresh; that you would not, by your own foolish and inconsiderate acts, tarnish your fair fame, and bring reproach upon your memory. You are getting old. We respect gray hairs, but we love truth better, and we shall fearlessly utter it.

From Salem Gazette, September (?) 1840.

GEN. MILLER AND GEN. HARRISON.

The Nashua Telegraph contains several certificates from respectable men who attended the dinner given to General Miller, at Hancock, N. H., in 1812. Christy Duncan, John Brooks, jr., Samuel Alld, John Steele, Solomon McNeil, all testify that at that period, and ever afterward, General Miller was in the habit of speaking in the highest terms of General Harrison.

This is what we confidently believed, and what everybody who knows General Miller felt sure would be proved. But it is a work of entire supererogation, to attempt to sustain General Miller's reputation for veracity, by certificates, from any quarter. What he has said is true, and everybody knows it to be true.

The substance of all the certificates is given in the following, from General Solomon McNeil:

HILLSBOROUGH, N. H., Aug. 18, 1840.

In 1812 I commanded a Company in the 26th Regiment, and was present at the review of the 26th and 23d Regiments in Peterborough, and while in the marquee I heard General James Miller say, that could he have William Henry Harrison for a commander, he would be willing to go anywhere, and fight anywhere—that he was not only a General, but that in all his conduct as a man, he came the nearest perfection of any man he ever saw. I have since reminded him of what he then said, and he repeated the same, and confirmed it as his opinion then and now.

I was intimate with Gen. Miller and slept with him at his father's house the very night of that muster; he spoke much of Harrison that evening, and frequently since, and *always in his praise*. On one occasion when I said to him, that I should always remember the strong expressions he made at Peterborough, in favor of Harrison, he said I know not how much good I have said of him, but one thing I shall always know, *I never said anything bad*.

SOLOMON McNEIL.

From the Lynn Freeman and Essex County Whig, April 3, 1841.

GENERAL MILLER.

This gallant soldier, whose brilliant achievement in the late war, at the battle of Bridgewater, has wreathed his brow with imperishable laurels, was at Washington at the recent Inauguration. A correspondent of the National Intelligencer, who noted General MILLER's presence among the vast throng at the Capitol, has furnished the following sketch of the incidents connected with the occasion referred to :

"I'LL TRY, SIR."

An Incident of the Battle of Bridgewater.

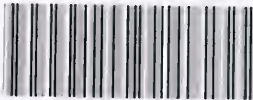
On the 25th of July, 1814, the bloody battle of Bridgewater and Lundy's Lane took place near the banks of the Niagara. It was six o'clock, and a sultry evening, when the British forces under Gen. Drummond advanced to meet the American columns; and a more deadly contest never raged on the soil of our beloved country than that which then commenced, the roar of the neighboring cataract lost itself in the booming of the cannon—the voices of many waters and the voices of battle sang *base* together—and the dead slept in sweet forgetfulness upon the moonlit hill. The first brigade under Gen. Scott, with Townson's artillery and a body of cavalry, sustained the attack of the British army for an hour unaided. Gen. Ripley with fresh troops now arrived, and relieved Gen. Scott, while the latter, with his exhausted brigade, formed a reserve in the rear. The British artillery had taken post on an eminence at the head of Lundy's Lane, and were pouring forth a most deadly fire on the Americans. Gen. Brown, the commander of the American forces, seeing the terrible havoc made by the enemy's cannon, concluded that it was necessary to dislodge them or retreat. It was a dreadful duty. The troops that were to march up Lundy's Lane might well say their prayers and make their wills before moving. It was certain death to every second man of the forlorn hope. As the commanding General rode along the foot of the hill, in thoughtful mood, he saw the brave Col. Miller advancing at the head of his newly raised regiment for further orders. He rode up to him. "Will you advance and capture that battery?" said the General. "I will try sir," said the modest Colonel. The General rode on, and the regiment gallantly wheeled and moved up Lundy's Lane. At every rod the artillery on the height sent its messengers of death through the dense column; but still there was no flinching. The voice of the noble Miller, as he waved his sword before the bloody gap, was heard uttering the short and expressive orders "steady men—close ranks—march!" Around him, the flower of his regiment fell like the withered leaves of autumn; but he heeded not his loss; he was ordered to take the battery on the hill, and he intended to do it. He advanced therefore, coolly and steadily to his object. Amidst a tremendous blaze of artillery, and at the point of the bayonet he carried the height. It was a gallant deed. I have never heard of its equal except at the siege of San Sebastian. It was superior in temerity to Bonaparte's attack upon Little Gibraltar, at Toulon, because Miller had no covering for his

troops in case of a retreat.—It was a dead march to glory; yea, at every step the rear rank trod upon the dead and the dying; and the groans of suffering humanity mingled in with the hoarse rattle of the drum.

When the conqueror, with his remnant of a regiment, trod upon the heights at the head of Lundy's Lane, and turned the cannon upon the astonished enemy, a death struggle ensued between the American and British armies. "These guns will decide the battle; they must be regained, or the army of Britain will be cut to pieces, and, if regained, the Americans will be conquered." Such were the thoughts of each General. Now came the iron gripe of war. A terrible conflict raged upon the height; and when the morning sun arose upon Bridgewater, 1,600 soldiers, friends and foes, lay sleeping in gory death upon the hillside in Lundy's Lane.—Surely, the battle of Bridgewater will never be forgotten by the patriot, the historian, or the poet; and, while the laurels of a Scott and a Ripley are green and unfading, let us not forget that the gallant Miller is alive, and that his country owes him a debt of gratitude which she can never repay. She, however, can say with her children when asked to aid him, as the hero said at Bridgewater to his commander when called upon to render him service, "I will try, sir." LET HER TRY, for the sake of her honor; and may the day never dawn when the hero of Lundy's Lane shall be forgotten by an American citizen. We glory in the service of the brave. May the laurel circle the victor's brow in life, and at last upon a broken column over a deathless tome! Reader, the hero of Lundy's Lane is beside you!



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